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the Territory. The report closes with a memorial of Clarence King (including portrait), Director of the Fortieth Parallel Survey, and first Director of the United States Geological Survey under the present organization.

A. P. B.

MR. PEARY'S EXPEDITION TO THE ARCTIC.

Mr. Peary has obtained a three years' leave of absence from the Navy Department, to begin from April 1, 1904. The purpose is to enable him "to undertake an expedition for the attainment of the north pole and to secure general scientific and geographical information concerning the high polar regions." Mr. Peary sent to the Secretary of the Navy, with his application, the following letter explaining his plans:

WASHINGTON, D. C., Sept. 2, 1903.

SIR: Referring to my application for leave of absence accompanying this, I beg to state for your information that I propose to secure a suitable ship, put her into one of our best shipyards, have her reënforced and strengthened to the maximum degree and fitted with American engines, possessing the maximum of strength and power with the minimum weight and space, so that she may go north as an exponent of American skill and mechanical ability.

With such ship I should sail north about the 1st of next July, and on reaching the Whale Sound region should take on board my Esquimaux, establish my permanent sub-base at Cape Sabine, and then force my way northward to my proposed winter quarters on the northern shore of Grant Land, establishing caches as far as practicable *en route*. By the earliest returning light of the following February I should start due north over the polar pack with a small, light pioneer party, followed by a large, heavy main party. I should expect to accomplish the distance to the pole and return in about one hundred days or a little more, an average travel of about ten miles a day. Returning, I should break the ship out late in the same season and return home.

If ice conditions the first year were such as to prevent reaching the northern shore of Grant Land, I should winter as far north as practicable and force the ship to the desired location the following year. In this event the expedition would be gone two years.

This plan is the result of some twelve years of almost continuous experience in those latitudes, and is based upon an extended personal acquaintance with the region from Sabine to 84 degrees north latitude and a thorough familiarity with climatic and other conditions and with Esquimaux.

The distinctive features of my plan are: The use of individual sledges with comparatively light loads, drawn by dogs, giving a travelling unit of high speed and radius of reach, as opposed to the man sledge, with its heavy load, slow speed and limited radius; the adoption of Esquimaux methods and costume and the fullest utilization of the Esquimaux themselves.

The advantage of my plan and route are a fixed land base 100 miles nearer the Pole than on any other route, a more rigid ice pack extending Poleward than is to be found on the opposite side of the Pole, a wider land base upon which to retreat and a well-beaten line of communication and retreat from winter quarters to comparatively low latitudes, which is practicable at any season of the year.

The work outlined above comprises two distinct stages, viz.: The navigation of the ship to the northern shore of Grant Land, the traverse of the Polar pack with sledges from the northern shore of Grant Land to the Pole and return. In connection with the former, four ships (the *Polaris*, the *Alert*, the *Discovery*, and the *Proteus*) have accomplished this feat. In regard to the second, I have already made four trips in those same regions, in which the average air line distance from start to finish was the same as the distance from Grant Land to the Pole. The air line distance from start to finish of my 1900 sledge journey was such that had my starting point been the northern shore of Grant Land it would have carried me beyond the pole and return.

I beg to state for your consideration the following :

The North Pole is the last great geographical prize the earth has to offer. Its attainment will be accepted as the sign of man's final physical conquest of the globe, and it will always stand as one of the great milestones in the world's history.

The attainment of the North Pole is, in my opinion, our manifest privilege and duty. Its attainment by another country would be in the light of a reproach and criticism.

The sense of all the foremost geographers, practical and theoretical, now converges upon the Smith Sound or "American route," along which I have been working for years past. Other routes have been eliminated. If we delay in preëmpting this route, some one else will step in and win the prize.

I believe that my experience, gained in years of practical work; my special methods of travel and equipment, the evolution of years of practical work; my personal acquaintance with every feature of my chosen route and region, and my command of the full resources and utmost effects of the entire little tribe of Whale Sound hyperboreans, who have lived and worked with me for years, give substantial reasons for anticipating a successful outcome to an expedition based on the above lines.

Very respectfully,

R. E. PEARY,
Civil Engineer, U. S. N.

To this letter Mr. Charles H. Darling, Acting Secretary of the Navy, wrote the following reply under date of Sept. 5:

DEAR SIR : In granting you leave of absence for the purpose of prosecuting your Arctic work, I am moved to remark that I believe you are better equipped than any other person in the country to undertake this work. You have the requisite courage, fortitude and physique. You have had a longer term of service within the Arctic circle than any other explorer. You have had large experience in sledge journeying, both upon the land and upon the polar pack. You are familiar with ice conditions through the Smith Sound route and north of Grant Land and the continent. You have demonstrated your ability to maintain yourself in that latitude for a longer period in health and safety than any other explorer. You have reduced the inconveniences and hardships of the Arctic service to a minimum.

You are conversant with the language and customs of the Whale Sound Esqui-

maux and are personally acquainted with every individual in the tribe. They have become accustomed to your leadership, and if you succeed in transporting the selected hunters and the best families to the north shore of Grant Land, as you propose, you will thereby establish a base which will enable you to live in safety and comparative comfort for an indefinite period.

Grant Land as such base has great advantages over Spitzbergen, Franz Josef Land, or any other known point, in that it has an extensive shore line, which a party retreating from the Pole cannot fail to find, whatever may be the extent of the polar drift.

In establishing a colony of Esquimaux at this point, you thereby establish a self-sustaining base at the nearest practicable point to the Pole. Such self-sustaining base has not heretofore been established in any such high latitude. Your ability to force your ships to a high northing with this Esquimaux colony is all important to your success. Such northing has been made by the *Polaris*, the *Alert*, the *Discovery* and the *Proteus*. There would seem to be no reason why you cannot do the same. Knowledge of ice conditions that has been gained since that time will certainly enable you to provide a ship better adapted to the purpose than either one of these.

The attainment of the Pole should be your main object. Nothing short will suffice. The discovery of the Poles is all that remains to complete the map of the world. That map should be completed in our generation and by our countrymen. If it is claimed that the enterprise is fraught with danger and privation, the answer is that geographical discovery in all ages has been purchased at the price of heroic courage and noble sacrifice. Our national pride is involved in the undertaking, and this department expects that you will accomplish your purpose and bring further distinction to a service of illustrious traditions.

In conclusion, I am pleased to inform you that the President of the United States sympathizes with your cause and approves the enterprise. With best wishes for your health and confidence in your success, I am, respectfully,

CHARLES H. DARLING,
Acting Secretary.